Expansion of Bhubaneswar airport

877. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the airport at Bhubaneswar is proposed to be expanded;

(b) if so, whether the Central Government would meet its expenses;

(c) whether it is proposed to set up an International Airport in Orissa, keeping in view its heritage character; and

(d) whether any kind of facilities are proposed to be provided at the airports in the State to boost tourism, especially foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has already strengthened and extended the runway at Bhubaneswar airport, leaving a portion through which a road passes. This portion of runway will be completed after State Government provides diversion road at their cost.

(b) Expenses on extension of the runway have already been met by AAI.

(c) There is no proposal, at present, to set up an International Airport in Orissa.

(d) Bhubaneswar airport is the only operational airport in Orissa. This Airport has already been upgraded and a New Terminal Building has been constructed to cater to 250 arriving and 250 departing passengers.

Losses to IA on unviable routes

878. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines is paying a heavy price for continuing to operate on seemingly unviable routes;

(b) if so, whether a look at the airlines annual report for 2001-2002 shows that as many as 24 of the 70 domestic services operated by the airlines during that year did not meet even the direct (cash) cost of operations;

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to improve the situation;

(d) whether any concrete proposals in this regard have been worked out for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) Indian Airlines including Alliance Air has been operating on several uneconomical sectors on the domestic network mainly due to Socio-economic obligations. The excess deployment of capacity on Category-II & Category-III routes as against the minimum DGCA requirements results in considerable losses to Indian Airlines. Being a public sector enterprise, Indian Airlines is not in a position to run entirely on commercial principles and has to fulfil the responsibility of regional connectivity and development.

Government reviews the performance of the company on regular basis and efforts are made to improve the economic viability of operations to the extent possible in consultation with other Ministries.

Purchase of aircrafts from Airbus Industry

879. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 4042 given in the Rajya Sabha on 29th April, 2003 and state:

(a) whether Indian Airline's proposal to purchase new aircrafts worth more than Rs. 10,000 crores from Airbus Industry has since been cleared by public Investment Board (PIB);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for selecting Airbus Industry only for purchase of aircrafts when other companies like Boeing are offering State-of-the-art aircrafts?